



COMTO

Conference of Minority Transportation Officials

Northern California COMTO – FALL 2007 Scholarship Recipients

AWARD OF MERIT RECIPIENTS (\$1,000)

Ashley Griffith is a senior at Cal Berkeley, majoring in African American Studies with a G.P.A. of 2.72. Her mother worked very modest wages, and proudly instilled in her daughter the value of education. Her mother was killed in a car accident earlier this year, and Ashley presses on in her honor. She looks forward to becoming a professional teacher and mentor to young people in her hometown, Los Angeles.

Kawana Hampton is a sophomore Nursing major at Merritt College in Oakland with a 3.75 G.P.A. She is a single-parent who has supported her daughter by working entry-level, sometimes physically demanding, jobs at Sears, Albertson's, and Federal Express. She looks forward to serving our community as a professional nurse. She is dedicated to learning and researching ways to prevent disease, hospitalization, and poor health.

Nnenna Ibeanusi is a sophomore majoring in Molecular/Cell Biology and Political Science at U.C. Berkeley with a 2.9 G.P.A. She will be the first university graduate in her large, supportive family. She discovered a love of scientific research in high school and intends to use her degree to contribute to cutting edge research in immunology and how it relates to infectious diseases, specifically AIDS/HIV. She also intends to use her scientific skills as a patent attorney.

Melvin Lane is a junior majoring in Child & Adolescent Development at San Francisco State University with a 2.5 G.P.A. He had a very challenging childhood, and watched with despair as his peers became victims of street violence. He worked at McClymonds High School in West Oakland, but was stunned when his older brother was killed in a car accident the day prior to an advanced placement exam. Although initially rejected by several universities, with encouragement from a loving uncle, he re-applied and was admitted to San Francisco State University. He wants to become a positive role model, return to his community, and uplift males of all ethnic backgrounds towards success.

Javier Oliver is a junior majoring in Political Science and Psychology at U. C. Berkeley with a 4.0 G.P.A. Hoping for a better future, his parents relocated to the U.S. from Mexico when he was very young. When he was old enough, he worked to help his parents support their family. He attended community college rather than go away to a university in order to provide his brother the academic role model he did not have growing up. He will study Law and Public Policy with the goal of improving access to education for all students regardless of cost.

Courtney Parham is a senior majoring in Sociology at the University of San Francisco with a 3.6 G.P.A. Having lost their home in the 1991 Oakland hills fire when she was very young, her family was relocated to an affluent suburb in Oakland where she noted that the children were morally and financially supported in their pursuit of education. While her family did not have the economic resources that others did, she expected to achieve as much as her new neighbors and has worked hard at pursuing her dream of advancing sociological research affecting underrepresented populations, and African-American women in particular.

Alivia Shorter is a sophomore majoring in Human Biology at Stanford University with a 3.4 G.P.A. Their father raised her and two siblings alone, and she would not be able to attend Stanford without the support provided by scholarships. She wants to pursue a career in public health and community healthcare services or teach and conduct research in biology.

Steven Singleton is a sophomore majoring in Management Science & Engineering at Stanford University with a 3.1 G.P.A. Surrounded by unmotivated peers at school and facing frequently dire financial circumstances at home, Steven attended an underperforming public school. Today, he helps support his mother, grandmother, brother and disabled aunt living in Georgia. His goal is to work as a project manager or at a consulting firm that will allow him to solve technical problems, manage a team, and interface with customers.

Gabriela Vargas is a sophomore majoring in Mathematics and Ethnic Studies at U.C. Berkeley with a 3.3 G.P.A. Since she was in middle school, she's had health problems that eventually required major surgery; She still lives with the complications of her health condition, yet she is extremely motivated to complete her studies. She intends to achieve advanced degrees in Mathematics and Education with the goal of teaching math and working with non-profits that focus on steering young people to education and away from lifestyles that lead to poverty.

SHARON BANKS AWARD RECIPIENTS (\$1,500)

Kristal Brister is a senior at San Francisco State University majoring in Child and Adolescent Development, with a G.P.A of 3.15. Although her family could not assist her financially, she will be the first person in her immediate family to graduate from college. She would like to attain a graduate degree in Child Development or Family Counseling in order to work with economically disadvantaged children and families.

Jabrilla Carr is a sophomore at Mills College majoring in Psychology, with a G.P.A. of 3.45. While she always achieved academically, she was raised in a single-parent household and her family can provide very little financial assistance to her. Out of necessity, she has worked hard to keep her grades up so that she can qualify for scholarships to subsidize her education. Her goals are to become a Psychologist and to start a non-profit clinic or agency that provides multiple services to youth.

Chaunte Humes is a sophomore at Cal Berkeley, majoring in American Studies, with a 3.25 G.P.A. She worked hard to prepare for college in overwhelmed public schools that have failed to prepare many of peers to succeed in our competitive society. She dreams of franchising a tutoring program targeting urban youth to prepare more underrepresented youngsters to attend college and to teach them financial literacy.

Leticia Mata is a junior majoring in Urban Studies and Architecture at U.C. Berkeley with a 2.6 G.P.A. She is acutely aware that she is competing with students whose parents are educated and who support their children in pursuit of a degree as she educates her own family and explains why she must sometimes prioritize school over family. She has become resourceful as a result and has learned to seek out moral and academic support from her new local community. Leticia wants to work designing transit-oriented urban communities that combine fair opportunities and a green environment for all citizens.

Shari Staine is a sophomore majoring in American Studies at U.C. Berkeley with a 3.1 G.P.A. Shari grew up in a single-parent household and she is the first person in her family to attend a 4-year college. She comes from an extremely large family that lacked the financial and educational resources to help support her goals. She intends to become a Certified Public Accountant.

Rian Whittle is a senior majoring in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at U.C. Berkeley with a 2.4 G.P.A. A native of New Orleans, both of his parents lost their homes and livelihoods to Hurricane Katrina. Rian is working his way through school and helping his parents reestablish their lives. The experience has made him stronger, and he's proudly learned to better balance his work and school commitments. Rian will pursue advanced study in security algorithms that can be applied to many fields, from Security to Transportation.

CURTIS GREEN AWARD RECIPIENTS (\$2,250)

Brittney Burford is a sophomore at Howard University majoring in Advertising & Journalism, with a G.P.A. of 3.08. Her hardworking mother, who is also currently enrolled in college, has raised three children independently in a community that exposed her children to drugs and violence. Brittney's ambition is to positively influence how Black Americans are portrayed in the media.

Elizabeth Elimimian is a senior Pre-Med/Ethnic Studies major at U.C. Berkeley, with a G.P.A. of 3.39. Nigerian by birth, she has lost many family members because of poverty in her native country. She learned that death and poor health could result from poverty and hopelessness when she moved to South Central Los Angeles. Of 800 entering high school freshman, she was one of the 200 who eventually graduated high school while many of her peers were lost to murder, depression and suicide. She aspires to become a cardio-thoracic surgeon.

Kristine Fontabla is a junior majoring in Nursing at CSU East Bay in Hayward, with a G.P.A. of 3.8. She decided to stay close to home for college to assist her mother financially and to care for her ailing grandmother. She lost her father in 2006, resulting in additional financial hardship for her family. She wants to earn an advanced degree in Nursing while working as a nurse, and she may pursue Public Administration.

Karega Bailey is a senior at Hampton University, majoring in Sociology, with a 3.5 G.P.A. Along with three siblings, he was raised in a single-parent family and at one point experienced unstable living conditions, necessitating that he and his siblings stay with friends and relatives. Throughout it all he has been his mother's "right hand man." With his family's support, he overcame many obstacles to become a collegiate honor student whose ambition is to teach high school and college students.

ROSA PARKS AWARD RECIPIENT (\$3,000)

Edgar Nunez is a sophomore majoring in Civil Engineering at San Joaquin Delta College with a 3.9 G.P.A. A native of Mexico, he and his brother are the first people in this generation to graduate high school, and he will be the first to graduate college. His career goal is to become a Civil Engineer. His application states, "Everyday I overcome obstacles; I see surprised faces when people find out that I am majoring in engineering, working at Caltrans already, and president of a club. This type of rejection works as fuel to motivate me towards becoming a professional in the work place."